all we fucking have is solidarity

The Final Straw Radio

An interview with a Long-Term, Anonymous Anarchist Comrade on Repression, Trauma, Security Culture, and Revolutionary Solidarity

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with whatever weapons at hand

TFSR: Frequently, the show speaks about political repression, incarceration, and coping with these realities. In this chat, I was thinking we could talk about the apparatuses of repression, but also about the ways that they're felt and how we might better be able to socially handle the blows. With that in mind, how would you like to introduce yourself for the audience to give context for this conversation, either by naming your generation or political tendency, country of origin, or movement that you've been involved in?

Guest: Well, I've been considering myself an anarchist for most of my life, and that's influenced the projects I've worked on and the positions I've taken in my everyday life. And I suppose we're going to be focusing on multiple subjects. I'm certainly not a trauma specialist in the institutional sense, but I consider myself a trauma specialist based on years of experience, unfortunately, with it.

I suppose beyond describing myself as an anarchist, I would say that I've experienced various intimidation, harassment, and captivity on certain levels as a result of my political position. I'm going to say that many have had it harder, some have had it easier. I'm only speaking about my experiences with repression that I've experienced personally, and how it's affected me in the sense of both having to overcome and live with long-term trauma, as well as my broader understanding of the state repression apparatus when it comes to dealing with political dissent.

TFSR: So the period after September 11th, 2001 is often cited as the beginning of the war on terrorism, an international escalation of undeclared wars, coordination and policing actions by U.S. intelligence and military around the globe. Domestically, the counterintelligence and counter-terrorism ramped up to use this kind of framing in order to infiltrate, assault, and repress groups ranging from anti-war demonstrator to protesters of the decades-old Israeli genocide in Palestine, from eco-defenders to animal liberationists in what became known as the green scare of the early to mid-aughts, and of course Black people, people of Asian descent, Muslims and immigrants.

Could you talk a bit about chilling and the threats and harassment and persecution of this period, what changes you think that it marked from the decades before and some of the personal and social scars it was designed to leave?

Guest: Well, obviously, 9-11 was an opportunity for the state. I am not interested in conspiracy theories about it. What happened, happened, and as a result, the state used the day as an opportunity to further and advance its repressive apparatus.

Many have compared it to the Reichstag in Germany that the Nazis were able to use. I would say that's a reasonable comparison in how the state used it to play out its long-term repression and further infiltrate revolutionary communities without having to do it in a more classic COINTELPRO sense, or to put it more simply, normalizing draconian and extreme oppression in a broader public light when people are unified as a result of fear. So I would say that 9-11, despite federal repression having been something that's always been the case with the existence of the state and any forces opposing it, and specifically a continuation of post-war McCarthyism of the very institutional and prioritized approaches of dealing with left or anarchist-oriented subversion and opposition to the state. But, in continuation of that American tradition of draconian repression under such a facade, 9-11 really allowed for a sudden rush to normalize things. Obviously, people reference the Patriot Act. Obviously, people reference the global War On Terror allowing, essentially, genocide without question, war without question. And domestic repression and surveillance of anyone who did not jump on board of the institutional right-wing response to 9-11.

But in regards to some of the instances that you described, obviously, I'm not 100% sure because I don't have the facts in front of me, but I remember shortly after 9-11, at least in the next few years, leading up to the Green Scare that you referenced, that the FBI actually referenced the Animal on Earth Liberation Front of the Number One Domestic Terrorist Organization. This was probably due to extreme funding that they had as a result of 9-11 going into militarizing domestic police forces.

But also needing a target that was visible and accessible to them as a result of that funding and the priority of what they would consider domestic extremism.

And obviously, prioritizing or considering a group that has never committed physical violence towards a human under the banner of Animal on Earth Liberation is a bit absurd, especially considering the various right-wing extremism that are far more violent consistently. But I

- https://thefinalstrawradio.libsyn.com/anti-repression-supporting-uprising-and-anarchist-prisoners
- A Tilted Guide to Being a Defendant (PDF Zine) https://files.libcom.org/files/atiltedguide-web-1.pdf

J20 Case

- Lessons from #DefendJ20 on Building Movement Defense Against Repression https://itsgoingdown.org/lessons-from-defendj20-on-building-movement-defense-against-repression/
- Sobriety Discussion
- Sobriety and Anarchist Struggle (PDF Version) https://files.sproutdistro.com/towards_a_less_fucked_up_world-SCREEN.pdf

Mental Health/Trauma/Burn Out

- Survivors Manual: Surviving In Solitary (PDF) https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/documents/Survivors%20Manual_0.pdf
- Sub.Media: Redefining Sanity Through Struggle https://sub.media/trouble-17-mad-worlds/
- Conflictual Wisdom: On Burning Out and Anarchist Self-Preservation https://itsgoingdown.org/announcing-publication-conflictual-wisdom/
- Against the Struggle of the Coward: A Note of Strength for the Underdogs https://itsgoingdown.org/against-the-struggle-of-the-coward-a-note-of-strength-for-the-underdogs/
- Repression, Resiliency, & Movement Support: An Interview https://itsgoingdown.org/bloc-party-interview-repression-resiliency/
- Solidarity Apothecary (PodCast) https://solidarityapothecary.org/
- Broader Wellness Resources by Mutual Aid Disaster Relief https://mutualaiddisasterrelief.org/health-wellness/
- Trauma & Recovery Brochure (PDF) https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/direct-action/actvist-trauma-recovery/
- Solidarity Is Greater Than Fear: Lessons from G20 to Stop Cop City (Youtube Link) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMObMCCgWjI
- A Life Worth Living: Care, Survival, Suicide, and Grief (Zine Resource on the Subjects) https://lizzieanderson.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/a-life-worth-living-print-final.pdf

https://ccrjustice.org/if-agent-knocks-resource
- When the Police Knock on Your Door Your Rights and Options: A Legal Guide and Poster https://www.sproutdistro.com/2017/08/29/when-the-police-knock/
- If the FBI Approaches You to Become an Informant An FAQ; What You Need to Know https://crimethinc.com/2017/05/17/if-the-fbi-approaches-you-to-become-an-informant-an-faq-what-you-need-to-know
- National Lawyers Guild: If An Agent Knocks https://nlgsf.org/if-an-agent-knocks/

On Phone and Digital Security Culture

- Taking Ourselves Seriously: Digital Harm Reduction (PDF Format) https://www.notrace.how/resources//download/pairnontas-tis-eautous-mas-sobara-meiose-psephiakon-kindunon/taking-ourselves-seriously-digital-harm-reduction-booklet-A4.pdf
- Electronic Frontier Foundation: Mainstream Resource and Non-Profit Advocate for Digital Privacy https://www.eff.org/

Infiltration Cases

- MSM Story on Mark Kennedy: How a Married Undercover Cop Having Sex With Activists Killed a Climate Movement https://anarchistnews.org/content/how-married-undercover-cop-having-sex-activists-killed-climate-movement
- TFSR interview on Spy Cops: https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2020/11/29/uncovering-spy-cops-in-the-uk/
- MSM Story on Eric McDavid case: Manufacturing Terror: An FBI Informant Seduced Eric McDavid Into a Bomb Plot. Then the Government Lied About It. https://theintercept.com/2015/11/19/an-fbi-informant-seduced-eric-mcdavid-into-a-bomb-plot-then-the-government-lied-about-it/
- Earth First!: Informants List https://earthfirstjournal.news/informants/

Anti-Repression Resources:

- NYC Anarchist Black Cross https://nycabc.wordpress.com/
- Support Defendants & Prisoners From the George Floyd Uprisings https://uprisingsupport.org/further-resources/
- Anti-Repression, Supporting Uprising and Anarchist Prisoners

would say that when that happened, it allowed for an escalation of repression and funding focused on making an example out of a group. I feel like there's many things that could be said about it, but I feel that the Green Scare was an opportunity for this state to make an example of what they would consider people that are willing to take things to another level

It also basically normalized the sort of resource and funding and focus that 9-11 allowed American federal and military agencies to compare and normalize the comparison of Animal or Earth Liberation, people who are not hurting human beings and such groups abroad, such as Al-Qaeda or the Taliban. Essentially, generalizing the term terrorism and allowing repression to happen on a level that doesn't take into consideration the specific motivations or the potential damage and violence of specific groups. All that who oppose the status quo of the state are considered essentially terrorists. But more specifically, there's a couple other points that I'd want to make. One, it clearly allowed for the rushing of various laws that are having extreme impacts on people today. That made it clear that legal rights do not matter, that freedom of speech does not matter. These things are choices that can be taken away at any moment by the state. Obviously, that's always been the case, but using the rationalizations that 9-11 offered the state made it very clear that the liberal notion of freedom of speech or rights is not something that applies to radical groups or people who are people who are actually looking to challenge the entirety of the current system.

In addition, I would also say that the state found Animal Liberation groups to be an extension of more radical ideas that they would compare to some anarchist groups at the time. And I feel like as a result of that extreme repression and making an example of multiple people and demonstrating the will that the state has to go after people for even objectively nonviolent crimes terrified the "radical environmental organizations" at the time who may have been on the periphery of the anarchist movement. So I would say that regardless of speculations or individuals' will, there was a precedent and an example set with the Green Scare. And a level of repression of dealing with anarchists the same way that they would groups I referenced, such as al-Qaeda, which was obviously the most commonly referenced one at the time during 2001. Following this, the movement really had to reevaluate itself and understand risk ratio and the types of demonstrations of resistance and opposition and discontent that we should prioritize as anarchists.

And you saw this kind of dialogue and narrative turning from an appreciation of certain actions to more focus on the streets and kind of contributing to demonstrations and organizing that maybe would be seen as less extreme sorts of "dialogue" from a movement. And from this, though, the state clearly also saw that it actually did set an example and what you saw some years after you had, you know, prisoners such as Eric McDavid, Jeff Luers, Daniel McGowan, people who had their lives ostensibly turned upside down and were imprisoned in some cases with extreme right-wing terrorists as a result of nonviolent crimes. You had these examples set.

And then some years later, say, for example, in 2012, you had this transition from actually looking to punish to the full extent of the law alleged nonviolent crimes, but still perceivably extreme crimes based on the standards of the state or speaking about it from a justice system point of view, I suppose. And you had what may have been riots that were happening with an anarchist presence or an alleged anarchist contribution to escalation and looking to create a more significant voice that is heard, I suppose, to put it that way. And then regardless of this period and transition towards a more streets-focused organizing, you had a flurry of grand jury subpoenas in around 2012. They continue to this day, which essentially give the state the opportunity to force someone to present themselves without a lawyer, without the "rights" they're given when they're actually accused of a crime, because these grand jury subpoenas simply look to divide and break communities rather than actually punish people. This is because they're also responding to people who are accused of associating or accused of being aware of non-extreme crimes.

In the specific case of 2012, where a lot of response was made by the state to May Day protests that happened in the Northwest, and there are many other examples since then. But in that case, you have essentially a low-level riot resulting in people facing long-term prison time for simply not cooperating. One, clearly the right to remain silent is another example of how anyone who is discussing or appreciating the notion of their rights is delusional and need to re-evaluate their faith in the current system or re-evaluate themselves in terms of their rejection of the current system. But two, you have an example of the state realizing that it cannot make the same examples that it did during the Green Scare due to the clearly drastic difference of intensity in action. So, considering all the loopholes it

Descending References and Resources List According to Interview:

Green Scare Background

- Green Scare Intro and Article References https://cldc.org/green-scare/
- Mainstream Media Story (MSM Story): The Green Scare: How a Movement That Never Killed Anyone Became the FBI's No. 1 Domestic Terrorism Threat https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/
- TFSR Interviews:
- Green Is The New Red with Will Potter: https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2011/05/29/green-is-the-new-red-an-interview-with-will-potter-may-29-2011/
- Eric McDavid after his release: https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2015/04/13/a-chat-with-eric-mcdavid-on-prison-post-incarceration-hope-ice-cream-more/

Grand Juries

- CLDC: Grand Juries https://cldc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CLDC-GJ-PPT-2012.ppt_-2.pdf
- Surviving a Grand Jury: Three Narratives from Grand Jury Resisters https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/crimethinc-surviving-a-grand-jury
- People's Law Office: The Improper Use of the Federal Grand Jury: An Instrument for the Internment of Political Activists https://peopleslawoffice.com/improper-use-of-federal-grand-jury-michael-deutsch-political-repression/
- Surviving a Grand Jury What it means to resist a grand jury; stories from those who have; how to support North Carolina grand jury resistance (PodCast) https://crimethinc.com/podcasts/the-ex-worker/episodes/59

Border Detention

- Crossing the United States Border A Security Guide for Citizens and Non-Citizens https://crimethinc.com/2020/01/28/crossing-the-united-states-border-a-security-guide-for-citizens-and-non-citizens

Police Visitation

- Center for Constitutional Rights: If An Agent Knocks Resource

during this really difficult time, so it's actually a two-way situation." There's so many responses and rants that I can go on in response to the question, but I think the best thing to do is that when this is published, we're going to try to list a flurry of links and references to everything that we discussed plus ways and resources that maybe help not only set a higher precedent for security, but also some resources on trauma, on solidarity, on anti-repression work and on cases of oppression and things that we've referenced that maybe some of the listeners didn't even know were possible to face when it comes to state repression. So I think that that would be included with this and potentially help any listeners who are interested in further research or understanding any of the topics that we've been discussing.

has of subpoenaing people to where the choice in that situation is either snitch or face nine months in prison with a potential permanent repeat of nine months without any definitive conclusion, legally speaking. (However, in most cases, if someone is capable of demonstrating their complete refusal to cooperate, that should set a legal precedent for eventually being released because you are incarcerated in that position as an open and verbal tactic of the state saying, "we are punishing someone for not cooperating with us, for not snitching."). But the legal specifics aside, it was a simple example of the state saying, "okay, we need to transition our approach and we need to figure out ways that we can divide people, terrify people, traumatize people, and also punish people without actually having the ability to charge them with a specific crime," which is a very, very scary position for a movement to find itself in. It's also very specific to the United States being one of the few countries in the world that still has grand juries.

Essentially, not only a matter of division, but shows how the state is able to engage in fixing expeditions to divide and conquer and also to test the will of people's commitment because you do not have a lawyer, you're not able to videotape what happens if you do go into the grand jury. So you're in a position where you have to prove that you haven't cooperated, that you haven't betrayed the movement that you may associate yourself with. And you had multiple people that fell off or ended up going to jail for many months and were probably traumatized in the long term without actually committing a crime.

And this is something that's continuing to happen to stay. That is one specific example of kind of a transition from the extreme oppression towards alleged more intense acts of resistance post 9-11 when it comes to the Animal and Earth Liberation movements. But you also highlight some of the ways that the state is able to traumatize and punish without actually having a charge against an individual or group.

TFSR: Yeah, thank you for that.

There's also other examples that one could point to in that kind of interesting vein of approach that you're describing, such as like: visibly tailing somebody or parking a cop car across the street from someone's house or a collective house or a project; making house visits, like messing with people's mail; no-fly lists... And no-fly lists aren't actually a court-

ordered thing, it seems. Sometimes it's just the government saying that we have the authority to say that this person is a danger without having to explain they've been convicted of this crime or whatever, right?

Guest: Well, once again, this is what I assume generally is an anarchist sympathetic podcast here, and I've described myself as an anarchist. Obviously, we don't have a specific embassy to run to when it comes to our position in the world. So expecting any consideration for our quote-unquote rights with the legal system or the kind of classic expectation of cops respecting the rule of law, it's very circumstantial and conditional. And they're very aware that when people are knocking on your door, they are communicating that they know where you live, they're communicating that they are thinking of you, they're aware of how that will affect the rest of your day, potentially the rest of your week, potentially your relationship with your neighbors, potentially the relationship with your landlord, and so on and so on. And it's a way for the state to use very simple loopholes against a movement that is also clearly not going to have the expectation that it will be protected by the same people who are coming to visit them, such as the Right might have, or more liberal activist scenes and so on. But it really shines a light how you can really face severe consequences and repression simply as a result of taking a position as an anarchist, simply a result of communicating your voice in terms of rejecting the current system and all the heinous things that play out as a result of it.

There are so many other examples beyond simply home visits, work visits. Work visits is obviously an even more immediately terrible one when it comes to affecting people's lives and survival. No-fly lists: There's no ability to actually find out why and no actual channel to challenge it. There is some precedent set by some challenges made towards the no-fly list, but in all reality, it simply is without explanation, without clarification, without a proper direct channel to challenge it. It simply happens without a crime committed and so on. Border checks would be another example. [You have] no rights at all when you're at the border. Search-and-seizure rights, and so on, do not apply at the border. In terms of messing with mail, there's so many instances of people... There are so many instances of that, without getting into a specific thing that I may have been aware of or have been terrified by. But it just simply shows how we have to take ourselves seriously simply as a result of having an anarchist position. It doesn't matter at this point. What we need to

whether you're washing dishes or watching TV, you don't need to take it seriously. Anxiety is not always reflecting what's happening in the moment. And that's something that I hope people can remember. Don't always take it seriously. Try to balance it with reality. A second thing I want to say to kind of piggyback from much earlier: even when someone's facing those odds, they should always remember that they're facing those odds because their enemy doesn't have everything that they need. If you even look at the guy who just got arrested, the Luigi guy, it was a McDonald's employee [who turned him in]. They sent the most militarized police force in the world, the New York police, after this guy, because they're obviously racist, classist bastards. And they just wanted to make it clear that, you know, people's will against the heinous, sociopathic CEO is not going to be tolerated. They only found dude because of a snitch. And I think that that should also shine a light on the fact that despite what they flaunt and the depths of technology and so on, and it's, it's going to get worse as it always has. But people's will has in many cases overcome, no matter what they've thrown at us.

In addition to that, and to be more specific to your question, I just hope those two little bits of commentary help comfort whatever trauma person's listening, because a lot of times people talk about trauma and they talk about it in a way that it's just defining it. You know, I remember I was reaching out to someone and they sent me this podcast and it was really nice and it was well done, but it was just like, "okay, yeah, now what? I get it. Yeah, I got that. I got that. What do I, what do I take? What do I do?" It's all on an individual basis. It's a long-term struggle. It's not going away. You know, that defines trauma, whether you're talking about in the political context or not, but there's a lot of ways of coping with it. I think that there's just a lot of healthier ways of dealing with it, whether it's depression or various mental illness, through exercise, through staying active, through not allowing the state to have victories over you beyond the ways that they do in the legal context. Things like trying to challenge yourself to not isolate. I think when people extend their hands to you, it's, it's really helpful to take them.

And to kind of also piggyback from what I was saying earlier about patience and consistency and being there for each other and demonstrating how we are worth it more than cooperating with the state or betrayal it's also on the individual to remind themselves that like, "Okay, I'm getting support. These are the people who are here for me

same standard, if not more, um, of people recognizing that and challenging each other and holding each other accountable when people are not embracing that standard for security, because it once again, is not only putting each other in danger in an extreme way and, and costing us our, our resources, our will, our energy, our, the, the vastness of our movement. It also to make people feel shitty enough to hopefully listen to me. It's a liberal practice. You are literally acting as if your rights are going to be respected. And that is a liberal privileged approach that should not be something that people who are serious about committing to an anarchist position in the world in all the ways that manifest, that should have even in their thought process, because that does not equate to negation. That does not equate to rejection of the entirety of the system that we oppose. That is a hobbyist, liberal idea that your rights will be respected. And obviously in the case of certain more severe cases, there are legal precedents for people, you know, to potentially get out. Maybe they did something wrong and you could, how Eric and David got out of jail and look how, um, you know, certain charges were dropped in certain cases. Like, you know, the state sometimes has to follow its own rules, but there's just too many examples of damage and, and danger and, uh, that could have been prevented, um, or self-doxing or, um, airing grievances for the state to, uh, prey on, like, or, you know, giving people's information out. Like, there's just, we need to have, um, a standard of accountability for setting a precedent that anyone who wants to claim such a radical position, such as being an anarchist, needs to follow and respect for themselves and for the people around them. It's essential. And, and if, if we don't do that, we're just simply not taking ourselves seriously.

TFSR: In closing, we've talked about, how do you support someone or how, how do we exist in community and in movement with people that are facing repression and different ways that repression could look? I wonder if you have any resources that you could share about how you've been aware of either yourself or other people who've experienced repression how people can better take care of their own needs or any tools or skills that you've heard of, or that seem useful for the listener experiencing that?

Guest: A couple of things I would say, one little piece of therapy style advice is that when you're experiencing that type of paranoia, that spiraling (and this might be good advice in life in general): just because an emotion comes into your head, just because of fear comes to your head, understand is that we need to reject the liberal notion of rights and we need to recognize that our lives can be turned upside down and we can experience levels of oppression and consequences and ripple effects as a result of that without actually committing a crime, going through the legal process and ending up in jail. And there are so many examples of this.

I think one more example that is really relevant today, going back to the J-20 and looking at what's going on in Atlanta right now with these RICO charges, those are two very famous instances. But there's plenty of others, obviously. I'm citing those two simply because they're so famous and when it's currently happening. But many times the case, the state is able to fabricate cases and charges and even absurd blanket conspiracy charges towards large groups of people without any specific evidence or concrete reasonable evidence, even based on the state's own standards of law, they're capable of simply charging the group, forcing them to fear that their lives will be taken away forever. In many instances, at least in both cases of J-20 and Atlanta, for no actual real crimes being committed. And in addition to that, they can divide people, which unfortunately has happened in multiple cases such as this, and able to drag people through the courts for years on end, draining people's resources, draining people's mental health through the process, exhausting people, forcing people to be terrified of attending demonstrations, engaging in political projects of any kind, supporting prisoners, things that technically should not be an issue because of "rights." But when you're in that situation, obviously it's going to have detrimental effects on your mental health and your strength and courage to engage in anything.

And also in many of these instances, the state also sets grounds of not being able to "associate" with people who maybe share your position or have shared a space with you prior to the charges or your politics. It's just another concrete example of something that's happening and really affecting people's lives and has affected people's lives. The state just strategically draining our resources, draining our health, with full awareness that they will not even, probably in some cases, hopefully in the case of Atlanta, to not result in people going to jail for years, not even being prosecuted with the expectation that they will get a conviction, solely prosecuting with the intention of traumatizing people and draining the resources of a movement, if that makes any sense.

TFSR: Yeah. It absolutely does.

For folks that maybe aren't making the connection with the reference to 2012, after the beginning of the wars, the war in Iraq specifically, a lot of the militant street actions had fallen away around a lot of the United States. And I think that there was a renewed sense of interest in more radical expressions of opposition to the state after the uprising in Greece.

And also you saw some of the sort of militant street actions manifested in 2009 with the popular response in the Bay Area to the killing of Oscar Grant. And so through participation in what would become known as the Black Lives Matter movement or an opposition to police murders, racist police murders in a lot of cases and through the Occupy period too. People became emboldened around this period of time in cities across the country to be more militant in street actions. It's a really amazing period in history to have lived through.

I like to think that society's technological and social developments are not always working at the same pace and that a healthful adoption of tool requires some degree of consensus, understanding of use, costs and benefits. In the U.S. context, the internet and mobile smartphones are major advances with which our social adoption is not keeping pace. This is clear through the ennui-producing apps and the too-much screen time, but also the ways that people underestimate the social and security concerns or misunderstand the security concerns of online communications and tracking.

As people engaged in opposition movements, I wonder if you could speak a bit about this, about the learning curves necessary for using these tools successfully and the problem of onboarding new, inexperienced people.

Guest: Well, I've probably said this ten times already and I don't mind saying it more, but we should never have faith that our rights will be respected as anarchists. In addition to that, anarchists should reject the notion of rights because they can be taken away as we clearly saw with the period after 9-11 and in just so many instances. But in regards to specifically smartphones, I am not personally a tech person or very into phones on any level. I do very, very much appreciate the creation of Red Phone, which eventually became Signal as one example. Not because anyone should ever discuss anything that could be considered illegal on the phone or through a text message ever. I want to say that very specifically.

takes place in, I think that it should be a priority alongside, immediately alongside information where anything is discussed, people should understand the potential consequences of things, the potential reality of repression that they face and the importance of protecting themselves.

And honestly, I don't, I'm not speaking across the board, but, um, I would say that we are not at that point, we are not prioritizing, communicating to younger people, the risks that are faced potentially, if someone allegedly engages in something more controversial, or just by association, embracing a position, putting your voice out there, writing across the board, people are not aware of the spectrum of repression that can make interface. People are not aware of the loopholes and opportunism that the state can engage in, especially when they first come to them. People probably think that warrants matter. They do in some contexts, obviously, you know, but, but I'm saying like, that's not it. It's not just about that, you know? And I think that because there's so many people that have been around that, you know, don't, don't, don't see someone disrespecting someone's security as creating an unsafe space that, that don't even know about this spectrum of oppression, um, and, uh, or don't understand or take seriously the depths of how trauma can affect people or, and so on. I think that this needs to be part of us reinforcing, growing, and creating a proper revolutionary community that has more self-preservation is, um, more resilient. And I think that's just simply a matter of prioritizing, um, risk ratio communication, and being aware of, um, of each other and how each other are doing and demonstrating solidarity, like all that positive stuff I said, but also just putting the information out there consistently, repeatedly for people to see, for people to have access to, to remind them so that people take things seriously. I think that there is plenty of cultural, um, dynamics in place to deal with other issues that we face as a movement. And unfortunately, those, you know, other problems that happen, interpersonal disputes, um, unsafe behavior, those things need to be dealt with. Those things are an unfortunate reality of just, you know, interacting with other humans in this very problematic world, but security and mutual respect for each other's security and recognizing the rate, the vast apparatus that we face constantly.

I mean, even just talking on the phone with you right now, it's giving me anxiety, you know, it's like recognizing that should always be something that we communicate to people coming around. Like new people need to understand it and they need to take it seriously. And there needs to be the

with a desire or a need for security? How you consider that equation?

Guest: It's sometimes hard. You know, you don't want to say recruit, it's hard to know what terms are right or wrong, but I mean, obviously myself, I mean, I was very young, I'm really happy about it. Um, but I think that there needs to be a couple of balances. I think that for one, I think people need to understand like the circumstances. Like for example, if you riot in the United States, you potentially face years and years and years until say if you riot in another country such as Germany or, um, the UK or, um, just, just being two examples in, uh, in Europe, um, you're, you're not going to face the same potential depression. So I think it's really important that we are very, um, strategic about what type of things that we are advocating for or, um, appreciating amidst the circumstances that we face and recognizing the specific ones to our context. And risk ratio is something that we really need to always be disgusting, especially with new people. Um, and that doesn't necessarily need to be done with our, our big voice that I was talking about earlier with social media. We don't need to be just putting propaganda out there with the hope of, um, scaring people, you know, or telling people that there's limits because obviously in the case of, you know, um, the George Floyd uprising, you know, there was precedent sent that I never thought would have been unimaginable in my lifetime. Um, just being one example, um, you know, uh, but I think that in the, there needs to be beyond that, the one other thing that always needs to be done is that the conversations about security, about, um, uh, oppression, about risk, about taking ourselves seriously, this needs, this should be a priority across the board always. I, I think that in some ways it actually, um, reinforces the, the, the facts that we are seen as a threat by the state. We are dealt with that in such a way we're in a very, very controversial political position amidst the world. Um, and if we're going to discuss that and recognize those things, we should have a parallel dialogue with new people that maybe don't know this or that, or haven't heard about this or that about how critical it is to, um, engage in an approach to everyday life and surviving it that secures ourselves, secures our communities and allows us to have communities of solidarity and mutual support that can overcome repression. And you know what, I think that there are certain people, probably the same fucking jackasses that don't respect people's security, you know, um, who allow for this, but, um, more broadly speaking, I think that if, I think in all instances that having an immediate, whether it's pure information, whether it's discussion, whether it's a zine, whatever form it makes, it

But simply as a result of having a controversial position such as being an anarchist, any information the state can gather on you, whether it's fishing through juries or taking someone's smartphone away during a random opportunistic stop or detention and seizing it. Authorities are interested in anything they can get, whether it actually results in a crime conviction or simply allowing them more awareness of someone and their associations. But with that said, obviously, beyond Signal, we are also in a position where there is a coercion of smartphone technology. We don't really have a choice if we, in many cases, want to be able to function and survive capitalism on a daily basis. And I'm meaning simply finding work, maintaining your job. It's a requirement in many jobs across the board. And I would say, though, that the associations, the context, the conversations, you know, have made it so our movement has benefited circumstantially being in this world and being one more example of having to use the master's tool to dismantle the master's house, to be cliché for a moment. But the post-smart phone world has really, really created things to a scary level. For example, say you are just staying at a friend's house and you are not accused or concerned of any crime, but you are just sleeping there. And the house is raided because of someone else in the house who's allegedly accused of a crime or become the target of police. During that raid, everything in that house can be taken as search, whether you've had a relationship with the person who's accused of a crime before that moment or not. Your phone will be brought in and seen as an opportunity for a fishing expedition. When you cross the border as a citizen or not, if you refuse to open your phone, they can seize it until they open it for you, regardless of being accused of a crime or not.

What we really need to be aware of is not only that we don't have rights, but that we need to take everything seriously. Not only if it's actually, not only things that could be seen as dangerous or controversial or allegedly related to a potential crime, but simply how we refer and how we talk about each other, the conversations that we have, the jokes that we make sometimes. Obviously, I'm not saying to completely limit ourselves, but we should be really embracing consistently options such as the disappearing messages, blocking our number on signal, and always making sure that we are really self-aware of hyperbole, really self-aware when we're talking about others, using people's names. Even if it's simply talking shit about other people or praising other people or comparing, it's really important that we understand that smartphones and the era we're in now and the ability for the state to not only take them without legal

precedent, such as being actually charged with a crime, but the state's abilities to actually go into the depths of our phones when it comes to technology that we're not even completely aware of is something that we should really take into consideration every time we use our smartphones, especially when communicating with other comrades or political individuals or in group chats. That's another example. Group chats have, there have been instances where people who had their phone taken from them during an arrest or a raid, the group chats and everyone's contacts in there was made public to the state.

But my bigger point is we essentially have a new snitch in our lives that we have to keep around and that is the smartphone, unfortunately. And we need to not only take ourselves seriously of everything we communicate, but we need to be aware that when we are crossing borders, when we are going to demonstrations, when we are staying in controversial houses, et cetera, et cetera, it's really important that we consider that if our phone is taken right now, how much are we exposing other people? How much hyperbole or references have we made that could result in the state being excited about us or excited about looking further into something or so on and so on. So I'm saying that obviously you should have this standard all the time of never discussing anything that could be allegedly considered illegal ever. But also being aware that you essentially have a dry snitch situation all the time where if you're not taking yourself seriously and you're not conducting yourself with consideration to your own security and your comrade security when it comes to using your phone and when you have it out and when it's open and where you bring it to, then you are essentially engaging on a certain level of dry snitching. I don't suggest bringing a smartphone to a demonstration.

You know, it's a new era. It's one that fortunately I'm old enough to not have always had to subject myself to, but it is terrifying at times, but it's just very important that we understand that we need to carry ourselves in a serious way and a consistent way and take ourselves seriously when it comes to our conversations and how we prioritize security, even if it seems like it's comfortable, even if it's legal behavior because legal behavior at this point should not constitute a lack of concern for not experiencing repression on some level.

TFSR: And so that answer sort of addresses a part of the social concern

knows, a real security culture. I think that people need to be held accountable for this behavior because this is violating what I would consider my broad call to having a revolutionary movement that has a serious approach to self-preservation and security.

And I also think that it is in some cases, maybe someone is paranoid, maybe someone is spiraling, but there's no reason that you need to violate a higher standard of security. There, there is no reason for that. Security is always called for, as far as I'm concerned, in the political context. And I think it's always a critical thing and always a great thing to do to lead by example, you know? So I don't think it's ever really bad to, to demonstrate security. I think that in some cases, people who might be pushing people away, isolating and struggling with irrational fears that don't reflect the actual reflection of their experiencing, we need to look into practicing ways of supporting each other's mental health and making sure people know and reminding people of what's actually happening, like I said earlier. But also I think it's demonstrating a lack of solidarity, a lack of respect, lack of consideration and also it's kind of liberal, the people who are usually kind of scoffing or not taking seriously someone else's needs when it comes to feeling safe and dismissing that as purely paranoia.

TFSR: Someone who's creating an unsafe circumstance in other ways. And maybe not in unsafe in a way that we find interesting or useful.

Guest: That person is creating an unsafe space in the revolutionary context. I think that you had a really good response to my little tangent there because actually I was looking for the word to say that, but also not to like offend anyone. I actually was really just looking for a way to say that person's creating an unsafe space. That person is violating someone's security and a broader movement security. And maybe they can dismiss it as someone being paranoid, but I never think that there can be too much security. And I think that there's too many instances of people having their lives ruined and projects falling apart and the state having small little victories because of things that people didn't think that they needed to take seriously until it was too late.

TFSR: I wonder if you have thoughts, I know I've kept you on for a long time, but do you have thoughts about being a movement that is attempting to welcome in new people into our communities and into our movement, into our organizations, if we have those, and balancing that

breaking down.

And the people, and I don't want them to have those experiences, but the people who usually dismiss someone who's trying to take extra efforts to preserve their anonymity, to have simple things, everything from having disappearing messages in a group chat to somebody who doesn't like telling people where they are all the time or are trying not to drop people's names in conversation... The people who usually are annoyed by that or speak so liberally or for myself, people who are demanding that I reference someone by name or get confused when I speak broadly about certain things. Those're usually people who have never really faced any intimidation, you know? And I'm not shaming people that haven't unfortunately faced some variation of the state's wrath in a more serious context than simply hating it because it's so horrible, on theoretical basis.

But I think that also people not taking other people's trauma seriously and people not living up to the standard that we should set, that I hope I am advocating for setting between our communities, those people should be challenged. I think those people need to recognize that they're coming from a position of a privileged perspective where they seem to think that their rights will be respected for saying whatever they want or they're not taking themselves seriously in the sense of assuming that at all times there's a good possibility that there's a way for the state to access information. And I think that we should be countering that with our dynamics of communication. But I also think that if people are not respecting someone's trauma, and I don't really mean to like sitting there and holding their hand and walking them through it, but also like literally asking people questions, texting people uncomfortable things, giving people's phone number away without their consent, adding people to group chats. I hate that it sounds so petty, but like, these are just a few small, common examples that most people maybe can see. And I think that if that continues happening and those people aren't being confronted. That is really also making it that we have all these priorities all the time of confronting this behavior or that behavior, or disagreeing with someone and writing a zine about it and putting it online. But that to me comes way before airing grievances or arguing about it. If people aren't respecting someone's desire to have a better security so that they can navigate their long-term trauma better in the face of oppression and preserve their safety... It's part of this kind of broad call I'm making for a culture of self-preservation, taking ourselves seriously and a phrase that everyone

that I was trying to ask about in terms of how we maybe coordinate and organize or, you know, how we socialize through chat apps and I think that approaching the smartphones as an attack surface (to use like a hacker-y term) is helpful for thinking about what are the components of this device that we know of: what are the ways that it can track our movements, our associations, et cetera?

One thing, though, that I was hoping to hear your thoughts on is social media. At one point when I was becoming political in the early 2000s the Indymedia Network was around. And so there were websites where you could post an event, you could post an article and these websites networked with each other. Maybe there was some moderation concerning the nature of the posts and the contents but it was a place where you could learn about upcoming events, you could get critique of events, you could comment, you could add pictures from a protest if you wanted to. It was a spot that people could go and be sociable and exchange information and new people could get information on upcoming events. That I think is like a that sort of message board is a predecessor of social media as it stands now and it served a purpose because people have a need to not only like share information but also to, you know, express themselves socially and within movement.

Social media as it stands now realized this need was there and that there were ways to monetize it and also ways to get people addicted to it and feed off of the loneliness of our society and there's back doors to all of these social media platforms that law enforcement take advantage of often without having to get any sort of, you know, document from a judge or whatever subpoena. And so we have this issue now where people join movements and they've been posting pretty carelessly throughout their life because they weren't taking seriously the idea that they're giving information to an attack surface.

And so I wonder if you have any thoughts about alienation, social media, and how we facilitate more safety in our movements around this. If this isn't a helpful question then we can move on.

Guest: There's a lot there.

I mean, first of all, I'll just note it for the older listeners of the podcast, clearly social media is like a celebration of alienation. It has severe

psychological consequences across the board, resulting in loneliness, isolation, lack of a learned ability of relating with people, insecurity, et cetera, et cetera. I find it to be a heinous thing when it comes to humanity. So that's, you know, my perspective on it. I don't see it as an inherently liberatory thing. I also don't see the phone as a liberatory thing, obviously. But we are forced to use them in some ways. And there are approaches to it that make it potentially more safe, such as, you know, referencing Signal earlier and being very, very specific with how we communicate and consistent more than anything with how we communicate.

But in the situation of social media, obviously, it has elevated the voice of anarchists and anti-colonialists and, you know, abolitionist radical movements across the board in terms of getting their voice out without needing the sort of funding that usually goes to counter-revolutionary voices or, you know, liberal voices parading as radical ones that typically, you know, exist in the academic bubble, for example. Social media has given anarchists an opportunity to reach new heights of having their voice heard by other people that are discontent without consciously realizing what conditions and institutions and so on are potentially responsible for them.

On a level of what I would see specifically problematic in the anarchist movement when it comes to social media is a couple of things. One, of course, political projects that are putting themselves out on whichever platform, well, for one, clearly get banned and knocked off repeatedly if you look at Twitter, for example, or Instagram. Various projects get kicked off all the time while there's extreme right-wing groups doing far more terrifying dialogue, but, you know, these projects are strategic. In all these cases, people need to make sure that they obviously, that their security is intact, that they're not exposing themselves, that they're not personalizing the account too much, that they are using the technology and means that allow them the privacy they need to communicate with less risk of doxing or even worse danger when it comes to state consequence. But those are political social media projects and obviously a useful tool for anarchists being able to reach new heights, having our ideas seen by discontent and people in this world. But on another level, personal accounts, maybe people need them. Maybe people need them because it's hard to stay in touch with people.

Maybe people need them for whatever other personal reasons. But if you

TFSR: Oh, I mean, from from birth, it was around it was a creation of of Hoover, like during and after the Palmer Raids period, like it was literally there to and this is again, a point that the two authors of COINTELPRO Papers bring up. And I think they make it quite succinctly that the FBI is there literally to repress dissident ideologies.

Guest: I guess we're going a podcast style back and forth...

I hope speaks volumes to anyone who gives consideration to what I would call "liberal American", or, you know, anywhere else in the world, they would be called "center right citizens." But when they're getting all excited about the FBI going into Trump's place, it's almost as funny as the right referring to the FBI as leftists or something for such behavior. But yeah, obviously, they have endless resources, endless funding, they have no comprehension of the anarchist movement, they don't understand how anyone could actually have any sort of personal will, or anything could operate solely based on affinity, solidarity, and in a decentralized way. Because... I don't know, because they lack humanity? So they're always trying to, you know, establish anarchists having a leader that doesn't exist, or, you know, fish endlessly until they can criminalize some sort of association, or exercise some loophole to inflict trauma or division. Or even potential incarceration, likely for not even significant crimes. But I would say... what to say about it, other than that is another example of the depths of cowardice, just sheer enormous, monstrous will of repression that we all face. You know, and I think that I feel so bad for all these people that were violated, but I don't know what's going on in their life. But I do know that if someone came to me and was a mess and struggling and told me that this happened to them as a result of infiltration, I would have a lot of patience and consideration, like we were saying. And I would hope that I could humbly be there. And humbly being there as part of my broader revolutionary commitment to being part of the anarchist movement and having a desire to preserve our movement. But humbly be there to do what they need and respect their boundaries, but make it clear that they're not alone. And I just don't feel like, especially in this kind of post group-chat, internet forum, smart phone world... I feel like most of the people in my experience who are there and who understand the stress, the anxiety, the unpredictability... And I'm not even speaking for myself when I say these things but in some cases their entire life being taken away for years on end, those are typically the people that I see who are really understanding when you're spiraling or

or spiraling, as you put it, that there's ways to respectfully just remind them that you're there. And repeating yourself can be really annoying. But someone in that situation, honestly, if you just tell them over and over again, "listen, this is what the lawyer said, this is what you can do. This is the reality. And this is how you're acting. Is that comparison reasonable to you?" If you are feeling overwhelmed, that is another thing. Maybe we can go exercise. Maybe we can go to a park together. Maybe there's an experience that we can share that will help improve this. But I think that having consideration and patience with someone who's spiraling and helping them get out of that position is something that can be done through consistency and commitment to preserving our revolutionary solidarity.

TFSR: The one remaining question that I had in here is the like kind of where I talk about the Spy Cops thing. So there's been an inquest in the UK for the last like five or six years that have been uncovering bits and pieces of police infiltration of movements since the '50s there. So animal liberation, ecological movements, anarchist movements, anti-militarist movements, anti-colonial movements...

Guest: Yeah, Mark Kennedy. That's the type of thing that's quite extreme. You have a police officer who infiltrated environmental anarchist leaning movements in the UK, had a baby with someone, but had a relationship with someone, slept with multiple people. I mean, that case, that's just one other example of the heinousness of someone that's willing to take on a position as a police officer. But beyond that, I mean, just imagine the trust issues that arouses. Imagine the conversations that someone has to have with their child or the violation someone feels. I mean, that's another example of trauma that's inflicted beyond just simply being in the courtroom, you know. And I also think that that case and, you know, there's also that cowardly little whatever, Anna, who was sent by the FBI to infiltrate American anarchists and resulted in the imprisonment of Eric McDavid and his original defendants becoming snitches who are no longer worth mentioning. Eric actually, fortunately got out. But that is another example of someone the state infiltrating. I think it shines a light to the level of which the state's willing to go to infiltrate our movement. The FBI was essentially created to in terms of post-war, post-McCarthyism, to target anarchists and leftists in particular. It's their organizational priority and probably their personal priority for most of the officers who take that Boy Scout decision to join such a terrorizing organization.

are living a life as an anarchist in this world, and once again, I'm saying a political position that does not have an embassy to go to, I would say that you need to take the same approach as I was describing earlier with the smartphone with your social media. I suppose it might be awkward if you are making an account and you're adding your family members who maybe don't share your politics or prior friends and students. Well, in that case, it's very important that you potentially keep your opinions on some level to yourself. I hate to say that, but if you're espousing for things that could be seen as extreme in the violence and publicly using your personal account, that is, I don't think I even need to say to the person listening right now that that is simply stupid. And in addition to that, I also think that social media accounts being used for personal grievances towards other people, political differences, that is actually not only exposing our identities and potentially exposing the identity of someone else you maybe don't agree with or have an issue with, maybe in some cases that person needs to be exposed, but I'm talking more specifically about arguments, shit talking, etc., based on a purely political level. You're not only self-doxing your position, potentially doxing someone else's position that you maybe don't want something horrible to happen to you, simply disagree with. But they're also exposing personal vulnerabilities in the movement that the state yearns to discover, hence all the fishing expeditions, all the calculated divisive judicial loopholes they find to traumatize and drag people through the mud with the intention of draining them of energy and resources so they cannot continue engaging in projects. Or they're simply burnt out on their position and try to resort to apathy if it's even possible.

But another thing that I would suggest, which I really, I am actually sad that I have to, but it should be kind of assumed that if you're using a social media to stay with family and friends, it's very important you keep that completely separate from your political life, you know, or at least be very subtle about your opinions. Or if you want to make it even more difficult for potential enemies, whether on the grassroots or institutional level, to not be able to expose you, to not be able to potentially use things against you if the time to use things against you is ever brought into your life by the state: you do not need to put your pictures out there, you do not need to open a social media account with a normal legal name. If you need to use a phone number or an email address, you can get a temporary phone number and it is worth it. If you need to use an email address, you can make one in minutes on multiple websites such as ProtonMail. There is

really no reason unless it's a matter of personal pride or desire to be seen that I think that people need to put their images out there, put their legal name out there, and release such personal information. And obviously there's also other levels of, making sure you're private, being very aware of who you add, and so on and so on. But I think the biggest issue that I want to focus on beyond someone's personal decisions is that airing grievances on social media platforms, communicating radical ideas when your face is there, when your IP address is there, when all of your friends are easily visible by simply clicking followers or whatever other thing is on whatever other social media app, I think that you are putting yourself in danger and you are putting others in danger. So you can make multiple accounts, you know, maybe it seems annoying, maybe it seems inconvenient, but there's too many instances of people having their lives ruined in multiple ways by the state or by fascists or by, you know, unstable people who've been canceled or kicked out for the safety of the movement. Too many instances for people not to take the extra time to anonymize their accounts, to be more self-aware of their accounts, and to always approach social media with the same notion that you would with your phone, that "Am I communicating and saying something that could potentially be used against me?" And I suppose, I don't know if that answered your question about social media.

TFSR: Oh yeah, no, that was really good. I was recently reading back through some of Ward Churchill and Vandermeer's research on COINTELPRO that was published in the 1980s, looking back on the Black Panther Party and AIM and other organizations that were organizing in the late 60s, early 70s, and the counterintelligence program of the FBI, like, so much of the action that they did was just to, to infiltrate, to watch for bad faith fights between people, or possible leverage points of, like, romantic interest or jealousy or whatever, competing groups. I mean, getting Karanga's group the United Slaves in Los Angeles to gun down Panthers on a consistent, regular basis is, like, pretty effective showing of how to do this. It's pretty incredible and pretty sad, and that's, people really are the weakest link in a lot of cases in these sorts of situations.

Guest: Absolutely. And COINTELPRO. I hate to even say it, because it's like I said earlier at the start of this when I brought up 9-11. It's another example of when you say this word and then people maybe start to dive into conspiracy theories or, you know, "Oh, the state, you know, acted so horribly." No, COINTELPRO is a proven historical thing that the FBI did,

listeners of your podcast too much ammo) it's something that has happened to me and happens to me and it's results in me pushing people away. It resulted in me just losing it, you know, especially in instances where there's things that are just purely beyond your control and don't even matter regarding whether or not you've actually committed a crime or not. Just existing in this heinous repressive system as an anarchist. I think that it's a matter of patience and consistency. I think that when you're dealing with someone with trauma, there's a certain element of them expecting patience because of the suffering that they're going through as a result of the police's behavior.

I also think that we should always remember that it's always the cops' fault. It's always the police's fault. I don't care. I'm just going to go on a sidetrack for one second. People at arrested demonstrations, maybe one person allegedly did something and many others were arrested. That's unfortunate. It's always the police's fault. I'm going to say that. So, but when someone is overwhelmed and the police are letting them, are intimidating them with the intention of causing this trauma, that leads to paranoia. You know, it's really difficult to demand that someone understand and distinguish between what is paranoia and what is reasonable concern. But, like I was saying earlier, it's a matter of consistency and patience. Okay. I remember a lawyer I had years ago, I was so freaked out about some things that happened and I just kept texting them all the time. And they were like, "I'm sorry, I'm a lawyer. I'm not a therapist," you know? And it's like, I absolutely totally understand them. They're so used to seeing people struggling all the time and so stressed that if your case is not comparable to a more extreme one, they might be frustrated or tired. But you know, we can be compensating for that.

The questions that someone spiraling will not be able to be calmed down by from a lawyer, by just having support and someone listening and being there. Because I think in many people spiraling, especially in revolutionary communities, they kind of expect people to give them more consideration because their struggle is a result of police oppression, you know? And I think that demonstrating that they are not alone and that people are there for them is very important. And obviously, if someone's isolating and demanding to be alone, you know, you got to respect people with boundaries on some level. But I also think that if you are close to someone or is there's a common someone or they're clearly overwhelmed

extra patience or me, even if they doesn't like it, checking up on someone, you know, not just not letting someone who's clearly overwhelmed with a very scary situation be pushing people away... Now they get to set boundaries, like I said, but being there, these are things that we need to prioritize. I'm not saying that we all need to just be in a collective therapy session all the time, but I'm saying that we need to take seriously the notion of understanding levels of trauma and support people need on an individual basis and in our interpersonal relations in pursuit of having a broader revolutionary community that can sustain repression.

TFSR: Yeah, that makes sense. And I don't know if this is an appropriate time to ask this question, but there are, as you say, like various levels of trauma and experiences of trauma that people persist through. And it's important for us to sustain our relationships and support each other through this, like a just hard world, let alone our political stance and our like ethical stance. And then when repression comes against us, you know, that increases, obviously. But what do you think, what do you think we should do when we have a comrade who is spiraling and maybe, you know, like maybe actually experiencing paranoia, things that aren't going on, maybe like having experiences of like jump, jumping to negative experiences of when someone disagrees with you, actually believing that they're a police agent or something like that? Like how, how have you approached that sort of, because obviously like that's still trauma in the body and trauma in the mind. And if they're comrades and we care about them and we want them to be well, but yeah, how do you think about that?

Guest: Well, I absolutely do agree because paranoia is the "cop in our head" that the state tries to plant as a result of all these fishing expeditions and opportunism and loopholes and harassment and intimidation and in some cases, prosecution, even over absurd charges. But, okay, I know that people might sometimes just always be looking for someone to say something wrong, so I'm just going to set this precedent early, like I did because I want people that always know where I'm coming from. You know, obviously there are some people that maybe their trauma leads them to engage in problematic behavior, whether it's violent on an interpersonal level or what have you. These are, these are rare specific instances and this behavior regardless is inexcusable. I say that, but I think that spiraling is a really important thing that you reference because it's something that unfortunately (and not to give the police

and the things that you described show how fishing expeditions, how opportunism, how legal loopholes can result in detrimental consequences for political movements without actually putting people in prison. And the things that you're referencing required an additional level of surveillance that was probably a little bit more complicated than simply people airing their grievances on their personal social media accounts or in group chats, et cetera, et cetera. You know, these that program, whether officially happening or not, is something that I'm certain has never stopped in terms of the FBI's approach to dealing with subversive groups, specifically when it comes to anarchists. It has, I am certain, never changed. I don't care if there is a specific end-all name for it, it is the normalized practice of the state. Especially now when they are constantly looking for the terror boogeyman as that, since they did post-2001, having this unprecedented terror attack by an alleged right-wing Islamic organizations such as Al-Qaeda, for example, and then immediately placing Animal and Earth Liberation Front group as the number one terror threat. This is, again, a group that has never caused physical violence to a human being and has made it a banner of their informal, decentralized, non-existent organization of whatever it was, to never do that, you know? So it's like, I think that the thing that you referenced is something that has never stopped, but now when it comes to the state's ability to find those vulnerabilities, those weaknesses, those divisions, and try to push them, it's probably easier for them now than it ever has in history, you know?

TFSR: Yeah. They could just sit at their desk and just scrape social media for a lot of the beef that's going on that's unencrypted and just out there in the world, or they're given a backdoor. Maybe the companies themselves give the same info that they're giving to the advertisers to law enforcement agencies...

Guest: I mean, listen. It's hard to say, obviously. But we can't live in constant fear. However, I think that we just need to create a culture of security, not only for ourselves, but for our communities, and hold each other accountable for this. And I think that tolerating people airing grievances, people with loose lips, and I don't only mean in the switching sense, I mean in the hyperbole sense, in the feeling like it's reasonable to say drastically radical things in a public sphere with your face. We need to challenge that, not only because, for me, that is a liberal faith in the notion of your rights being respected by the state, which should be negated and rejected by every anarchist. Not only because that to me is a logical,

political decision of an anarchist perspective, but also to help refine our strength and our security as a movement because we need to reevaluate our expectations of being safe once we've taken such a position.

But with that said, I absolutely think that people need to prioritize their battles and also, you know what, there are things that we can say in private to each other. There are things that maybe I disagree with, I have an issue with. Maybe it's another political group that doesn't share my exact aesthetics or narrative as an anarchist. Maybe it's an analysis of a broader political event. We have such a small voice as anarchists. We have such a small voice because we don't benefit any of the things that give funding to the big voices that we hear in this world. We are operating against all of the odds, minimal resources, and amidst the most insane repression that doesn't necessarily get a lot of sympathy or even attention in the world due to mainstream media not being concerned with it, unless it's serving a broader political point. But with that said, with such a small voice, we should be prioritizing recognizing our enemies, the institutions that cause the suffering that we are against, the institutions that repress us rather than our disagreement with so-and-so different political group or our disagreement with so-and-so person. I just think it's a very immature and very honestly kind of petite-bourgeois approach to using your voice because it's very insular. It's not something that people outside of the so-called bubble of anarchist or radical politics are even going to understand. And from what I consider to be important with my position is that we want to be using our voices to communicate news, information, ideas, and revolutionary desires that are accessible to discontented people to help people to consciously recognize the conditions as possible for their discontent and to essentially also theoretically generalize tension and revolt. I think however that looks, I'm not saying specifically, but I'm saying that it's not only humiliating of our movement, exposing vulnerabilities to the state, but it's really kind of disrespecting the little voice that we have, you know?

TFSR: Yeah, for sure. So one purpose of repression, as noted before, is to intimidate and stress community members and our social bonds. At the same time, disagreements and dissonance is a part of any living movement and shouldn't be avoided. I guess I'm kind of asking about what we're talking about, but the ideal would be to channel it into helpful practice. Can you talk about what shortcomings you've seen in our community practices of support? What sorts of social practices do you see

know, this is me, this is me setting a precedent for myself, but I'd like that from the broader community. But this person did this much time for this, they had all those experiences and they're still around and they're still not broken. That's worth me giving them a little extra space to air out their grievances on a private level. I'm not trying to counter everything we said about social media, but I think that they earn a little bit of extra space and consideration and patience to be supported. And that's one very specific and kind of funny example. I hope maybe the listeners will continue listening to me rant right now, but I think that we need to be approaching each situation where we have to take things seriously. Where it's like, "okay, if that person did that much time and that person's still around, that person's a committed person and worthy of our consideration and patience." And once again, because this is just a simple podcast, you know, we can't get into every question you ask into the full depths of answers. But I think that metaphor speaks for itself. That happened in three cases, actually, of people who got out and were not the most pleasant individuals. But you know what? I didn't go through what they went through. I did respect them for their courage and their strength of getting through that experience. They're worth the extra patience. And if someone is getting a knock on their door and for weeks they keep drinking and they're they're having suicidal fantasies, they're isolating... Respect boundaries, but you know, we need to keep coming back, keep checking up on them, keep making sure they know that people care. Because it's not a fucking hobby.

This isn't a hobby. The position isn't a hobby. Potentially the association with other people sharing the position is not a hobby. It is a struggle, you know? And obviously there's variations of struggle in terms of extremity, you know, there's these crazy images coming from other places in the world such as Chile being one example. There's variations on intensity of struggle and resistance. But I'm saying though that we cannot give up on each other and we need to also assess ourselves because for example, if that person did all that time and I was annoyed by them and just cut them off, I would feel so ashamed of myself. Because not only does that person deserve respect for the strength that they demonstrated, but that person demonstrated that strength because they felt that the community and movement and tendency and position that I shared with them was worth it when it came to responding to this heinous world imposed on us. That it was worth them preserving their integrity and preserving their commitment to the ethics that define our movement. So if my little bit of

one another and making the time to listen to one another and try to help each other navigate that long-term trauma.

Once again, I feel kind of shitty because I feel like I'm speaking about something that's incredibly complicated, you know. I mean, I'm sure that a conventional psychologist and psychiatrist would love to jump in right now with their own opinion of trauma and how it manifests, but I think that trauma is a tool of the state to divide and suppress anarchist movements. And I think that us being more aware. You know, there's variations of, there's different types of people. There's a spectrum of courage. There's people who are willing to do certain things. There's people who are not willing to do certain things. There's people who can maybe handle getting a knock on their door more easily than someone else. Maybe because that other person has experienced other traumatizing experience that have affected that, how they're going to respond to that situation. It's individual case-by-case basis, I guess. But my bigger point is constantly trying to help each other navigate and work through that long-term trauma and not giving up on people, not getting annoyed at people and understanding that solidarity amidst repression and supporting one another is a revolutionary act in itself. And it's a critical part of our self-preservation as an anarchist movement. If we're going to take ourselves seriously and if we're going to be worth it for people to stick around, for people to make the hard decisions and for people to take us seriously when it comes to listening to our voice when we actually get it out there.

So, you know, I think that for myself, I had a lot of trauma when it comes to various experiences that I would classify as some sort of depression, and I'm still dealing with it. It's a long-term struggle, just like being an anarchist is, you know. One example is years ago, there was someone I really, really like and respect, and they did a lot of time in jail. When they got out, they were kind of an asshole. They weren't saying toxic things, they weren't saying things that were like truly bad. They weren't, you know, doing truly problematic behavior, but they were just rude, cynical to a point that was hard to deal with. But you know what? They did years in jail, you know. And they came out and their heart was still in the right place. They were still coming to spaces. They were still committed to any projects that they could work on amidst all their conditions so that they stayed to it. They still never, ever forfeited their integrity. And my priority and my approach to that was, "all right, this person's obnoxious. This person is a negative nancy, but you know what? They've earned that." You

as adoptable to counter the state's attempts to pit us against each other and ourselves? And how do we engage in principled conflict and disagreements with comrades without giving ammo to our enemies?

Guest: So I guess I can repeat that in a different way if you want. I mean, it's a hard question that I'm certain I will not give a definitive answer to, and I don't think that there is one answer to that. And I will also say, you know, I'll repeat that I'm simply speaking from the experience that I've had. And also, I don't want to give more ammo to the state that's likely listening to this podcast.

But with that said, I think that I can speak a bit more in a broader sense so that people can interpret for themselves and maybe challenge themselves. One thing that I want to focus on is creating movements of support, infrastructure of support, to make it that we are worth the inconvenience, that movement is worth the time, if that makes sense. We are, instead of having a toxic, divisive community that's prioritizing, bickering and political difference. And in some cases, maybe it's important for growth and to challenge issues that present themselves. I'm not denying that whatsoever, but it's also, you have so many cases, especially with younger people who join a movement and find themselves in a great deal of trouble. The state, once again, and in all of its cowardice, preys on people like this because they haven't had the years and years of relationships and bonds and affinity that would make cooperation with them something that would not be worth continuing life after. You know? I believe that people who just join a movement, you know... One, there should be a constant reminder of the importance of creating a security culture, to use a term that I'm sure most people have heard before, but a priority of that culture. And two, evaluating ourselves and our dynamics with each other in terms of having a community and a movement that people are there, that you know have your back when you are facing the worst odds. I think that having that be the precedent for all of our decisions and how we approach both conflict and project and the positive and the negative... I think that having that as the standard of our approach, we will be a movement that is worth the time and as fucked up and as hard as that is to say because, you know, the circumstances can be terrifying. People face years the most threats traumatizing interrogation, opportunistic detention in the worst facilities, etc. There are so many scary things that a person faces in that moment, but I truly believe that we don't really have very many, we don't really have that many victories, you know. I mean,

we're engaged in a struggle that is not necessarily something that I see winning in our lifetime, but it's a struggle that I personally, for myself, feel committed to because forfeiting my position would be essentially betraying not only myself, but all the people that I've created bonds with and affinity with, both political and not, who respect me for me taking an inconvenient route when it comes to not allowing myself to give in to accepting this horrible, horrible system of the state and capitalism, to put it simply. But this broader global catastrophe that we're experiencing in the world today. If I was to be in a position where my commitments were tested, I feel that those people would go through my mind, the community that supports me would go through my mind. We have to have that consistent example set, especially when we are organizing with younger people, are supporting younger people. There needs to be the infrastructure that people know that people have their back. And people have their back not only when they're already in jail, not only when they're facing a charge, but when they get knocks on their door, when they get, you know, pulled aside at the airport, when they get their house is raided... When all these examples happen where people are affected and they're overwhelmed, people need to know that their struggles are taken seriously by other people that share a deep level of solidarity with them because all we fucking have is solidarity. That's it! I'm sorry, but that is for me one of our crucial victories. It is critical. And I, you know, when someone is in that situation, they need to know that cooperation with the state is not in their interest... And also in many cases, the state usually only is interrogating someone or putting something on someone because they don't actually have what they need to resolve for crime. These are things that I've heard from lawyers, that it never benefits someone to talk or not talk. But in terms of cooperating plea deals, other snitcher rankings that people have, we need to set a precedent with our communities that make it so it's not worth betraying it because it's not worth continuing life because you are a shame and a coward to yourself.

And I think that we, it's easier said than done. And I'm not coming from this "like, live, love, love" situation. Because when, when someone's in that situation if they choose, especially a younger person or being one example, if they choose the "easy route" of cooperation and betrayal in that situation, facing the draconian face of the state (to the cynical viewer), obviously, no matter what: fuck them, fuck them! Wipe your hands clean, that's another precedent that we should always have no consideration for, obviously. But, with that said, we also need to re-

because even though people aren't facing crime, they are facing jail time. But in terms of police visits, in terms of long-term harassment, intimidation, doxing, trials, there's another element of repression where there's things that are beyond your control. You are actually facing potential consequences and repression of not actually committing crimes, legally speaking and that's a terrifying position to be in. Where simply your position alone has the potential of experiencing all those trauma-inducing experiences with the state that happen. And I think that one, we need to always, I'm saying this from the beginning, we need to always be prioritizing our comrades in jail and our comrades facing serious time for specific crimes. But we also need to consistently recognize not only the trauma that's inflicted on those individuals, but people who are experiencing other types of repression, some of the references that we made in terms of state opportunism.

But to speak about more trauma generally, I think that it manifests in many ways. And, you know, one person told me something really interesting once and it's that "trauma is not something that you just get over. It's not something that you can get over." And, I actually kind of agreed with them. It's a long-term, potentially permanent experience that you're not necessarily going to get rid of, but you're going to learn how to better cope with. And I think that there's many instances where people maybe get tired of the "emotional labor" of dealing with someone who's either getting harassed endlessly by the feds at their work or are all over neo-Nazi and right-wing forums, or people who are facing a grand jury or people who can't fly or people who get harassed all the time whenever the opportunity is given to the state to do so. This can result in substance abuse, this can result in alcoholism, this can result in insomnia that results in the prior to latter consequences. You're dealing with a situation where in many cases you don't really have control, even based on your own behavior of experiencing potential repression and consequences by the state. And I think that in terms of recognizing that trauma is going to be a long-term experience and there's variations of it when it comes to repression, but people who have gotten years in prison, people who have been harassed over and over again, people that get audited every fucking year, people who've had their houses raided without any charge ever happening... You know, these things affect people's, how they sleep in their homes, where they decide to live, you know, there's so many cases of trauma beyond just someone freaking out or this or that. We need to just be constantly there for each other in the sense of also checking in with

Guest: And we love conflict. We love conflict. Conflict is the fighting element of the anarchist. But there, there's, there's toxic conflict where people are screaming without the intention of wanting to be heard that they're simply screaming with the intention of demeaning or silencing someone, you know, but there's conflict that leads to growth. And I think that not only to use the metaphor about someone facing, you know, the terrifying consequences if they don't betray their community and cooperate with the worst people in the world. Also it's just in regards to the self-preservation of each other as a revolutionary movement and making sure that people can turn to each other when it comes to mental health, when it comes to the trauma that might result in repression. And also in terms of the fact that, as you put it, it's a long-term, we're, we're essentially calling for true freedom. And I honestly think that there is no other political tendency that, that does that. So we are going to face the most extreme odds.

And also beyond the most extreme oppression, it's also can be exhausting, the disappointment. Look at the direction the world is going in or has been going in and continues to go in relentlessly. That solidarity is like I said earlier, it's like our one victory. And it's something across political movements throughout history. And it's a victory that we should be constantly celebrating and, um, enhancing between our relationships and our approach. And we should also remind ourselves not only in terms of like the battles that we prioritize, but that our enemy is the state and capitalism. And that's where our passion should be, in my opinion.

TFSR: Can you talk a bit about the pressures of direct and indirect repression on people, how you've seen people like individuals exhibit signs of trauma from this and approaches, tools and skills that have been helpful to support the person experiencing this and moving through it as a community? So sort of like less about, we've sort of talked about the importance of this at a macro level, but I'm wondering more on an individual and like micro level.

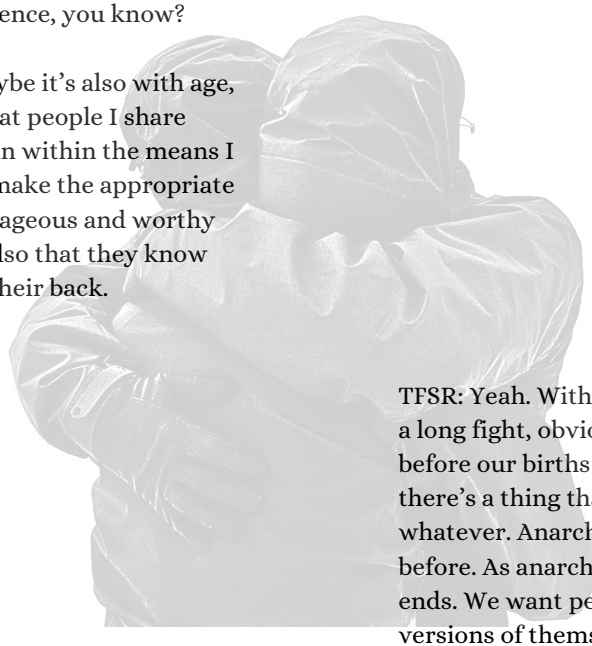
Guest: I think that's a great question because one that's getting more, I think, into specifics of ways that we can preserve ourselves and create that movement that's worth never betraying, no matter what the odds. But I think that like we were describing earlier, first of all, the priority is always people in prison, you know, in terms of resources and support for people facing specific charges. And also, you know, grand jury resisters

evaluate ourselves. We need to ask ourselves "Why aren't we a movement that is worth the harder route? Why? Why is this person feeling that their betrayal is not worth the time, that's not worth the inconvenience, that's not worth overcoming the fear?" And I think that this is the sort of precedent that we need to set in all of our approaches, all of our arrangements. And I know, when I'm speaking really broadly and it's easier said than done. Especially in the United States, a lot of people come to the political, you know, you or realization because they are maybe a strange person or just we're maybe just a little crazy because, you know? You've got to be a little crazy to challenge the everyday life that's imposed on us by the state and capitalism, the broader system of things. But, with that said, I believe that if we have this approach and we truly are constantly reminding ourselves of this, when times get hard and things get to that point, we can trust each other because we also have an infrastructure and community and way of organizing and relating to each other that is healthier and more supportive. And people know whether they're in a cage or on trial or lost their job because someone knocked on their boss's door, lost their home because the feds knocked on their door, can't fly, you know, et cetera, et cetera, that people are going to be there, to take them seriously and support them any way they can, you know? And I really, really think that me just saying that I feel like this is one of the most critical things in terms of preserving our movement in the long term, keeping each other safe and keeping each other healthier is important. This is one of the biggest tactics that we have to counter the state's divisive and opportunistic approaches to repression, especially when they're not actually even trying to charge anyone or even expect to charge anyone with a crime. I think that if we take that precedent and prioritize that approach and evaluate ourselves, that in the longer term maybe our priorities of what we use our voices for, of how we relate with each other, and of how much we invest our passion and our little resources and our projects to setting infrastructure so people know that we have their back.

I'm not saying, you know, "worth the time", but I'm saying that it's not worth living to betray a movement that has had your back. And if someone does do that, that not only fuck them for the cynical reader, they should live in shame for the rest of their cowardly little life because they literally are abandoning a movement that had their back amidst, you know, the scariest of odds. And I just think that this is something we should constantly be reminding each other and ourselves, to challenge

pride, to challenge competition, get rid of this garbage "emotional labor" nonsense, alienating terminology, get rid of that shit. No, it is labor in terms of supporting each other. There is no point, unless we have our solidarity, there's no point to expect for our movement to be strong and resilient unless we are constantly making sure that we are there for each other. And challenging ourselves and challenging our conditioning when it comes to toxic behavior or lack of support or this, I don't want to say selfishness, but being more concerned with someone's pen name or reputation or so-and-so. These are not the things that are going to prevent people from having their lives ruined or choosing to abandon a movement, you know? And these are also the things that are going to not only prevent dangerous cooperation, it is also the sort of thing that is going to prevent burnout, people dropping off, transience, you know?

So I don't know. Maybe I'm speaking too broadly. Maybe it's also with age, but I just feel like I am doing my best to make sure that people I share affinity with know that I have their back any way I can within the means I have. So that when, if things ever get hard, they will make the appropriate and revolutionary choice to not only live a more courageous and worthy life without cowardice and shame and betrayal, but also that they know and they are comforted by the fact that people have their back.



TFSR: Yeah. With what you're saying, it really resonates with me. So this is a long fight, obviously, that we're engaged in and it extends historically before our births and will continue after our deaths. And I think that there's a thing that's worth noting and it's not all that deep of a thought or whatever. Anarchists have had this before, other people have had it before. As anarchists, we believe in a correspondence between means and ends. We want people to stay in community with us and to be the best versions of themselves. We want to be the best versions of ourselves as well. How do we do that but by modeling the kind of relationships that we think we want in the world. And doing that allows us to fight, because we are comrades, with each other because we take each other seriously. Because we're hevals, whatever terminology you want to use. I think that the idea of being the community that is worth fighting for, is worth going through the annoying conversations for, having the uncomfortable conversations of checking in with people about things that they're doing, things that they're saying from a perspective of mutual respect and concern.